

ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE,

*Richmond, February 17, 1863.*

GENERAL ORDERS, }  
No. 19. }

With a view to determine the military state of certain persons in the army, who have left their regular commands and joined others, under the impression that they had a right so to do, but are claimed as deserters under existing laws, the following Orders are published :

I. Persons who joined new companies at the expiration of their first term of service, under the act authorizing re-enlistments for the war, will be continued in their present companies, provided the facts do not show an intention to desert their former commands; also all paroled prisoners whose term of service had expired, and who enlisted in new companies under the provisions of General Orders, No. 44, Adjutant and Inspector General's office, Richmond, 17th June 1862, will be continued in their present companies.

II. All persons who have really deserted and have joined other companies, will be returned to their original commands; and the benefit of this Order is to be strictly limited to cases arising from a misconception of rights and duties under the re-enlistment and conscript laws.

III. The privilege heretofore exercised by troops on the battle field, of exchanging their small arms and field pieces for those captured from the enemy, is hereafter forbidden, and the prohibition will be strictly enforced by commanders. Disasters may easily result from a disregard of this necessary order. All such exchanges must be made by proper authority, and with a due regard to the efficiency of the troops. Captured arms and artillery will be turned over to the chief ordnance officer, and be assigned, whenever practicable, to the troops to whom the General shall, on testimony, award their capture.

By order.

S. COOPER,

*Adjutant and Inspector General.*